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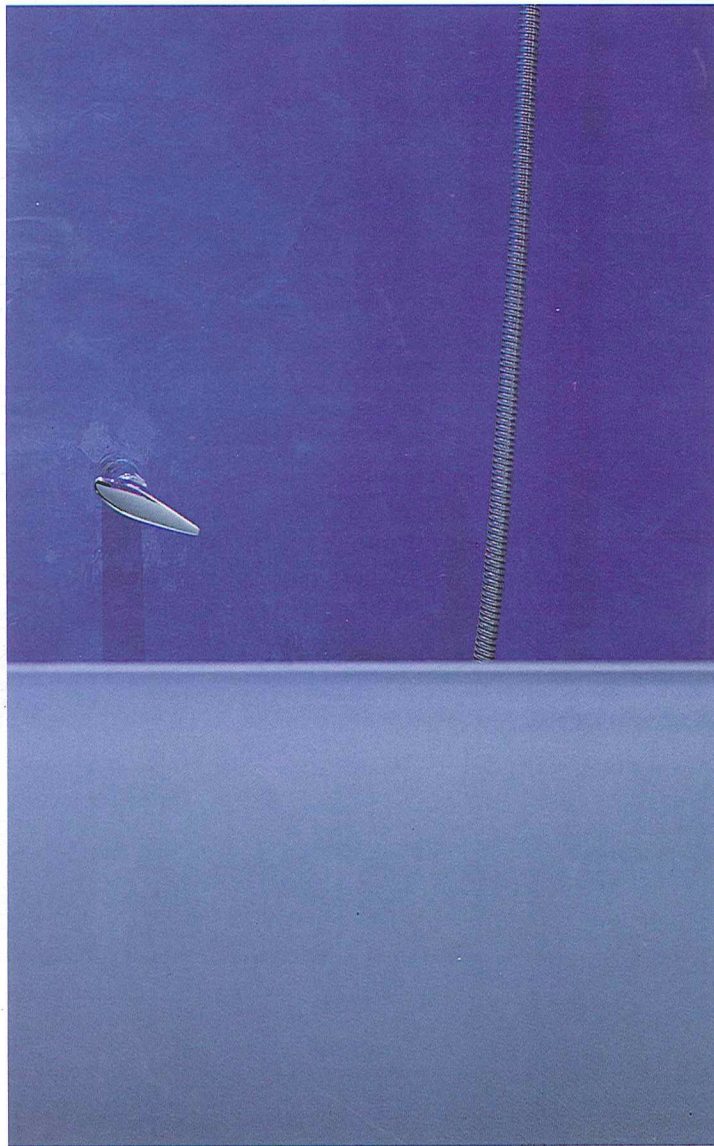
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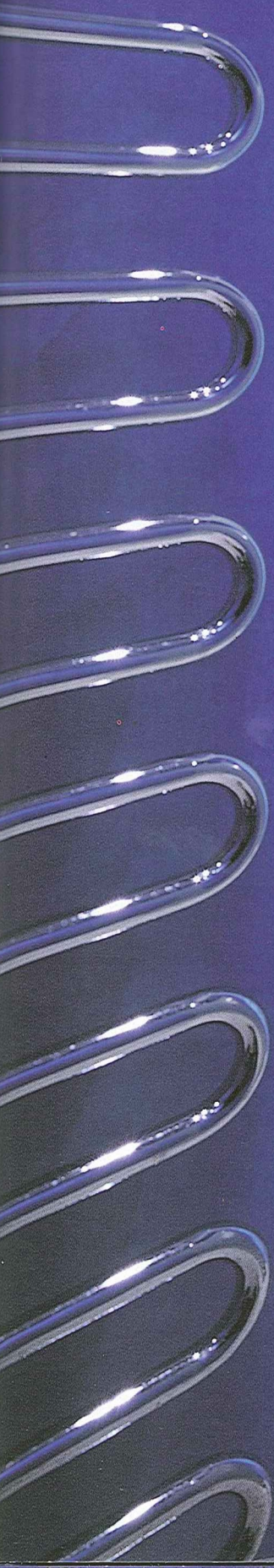
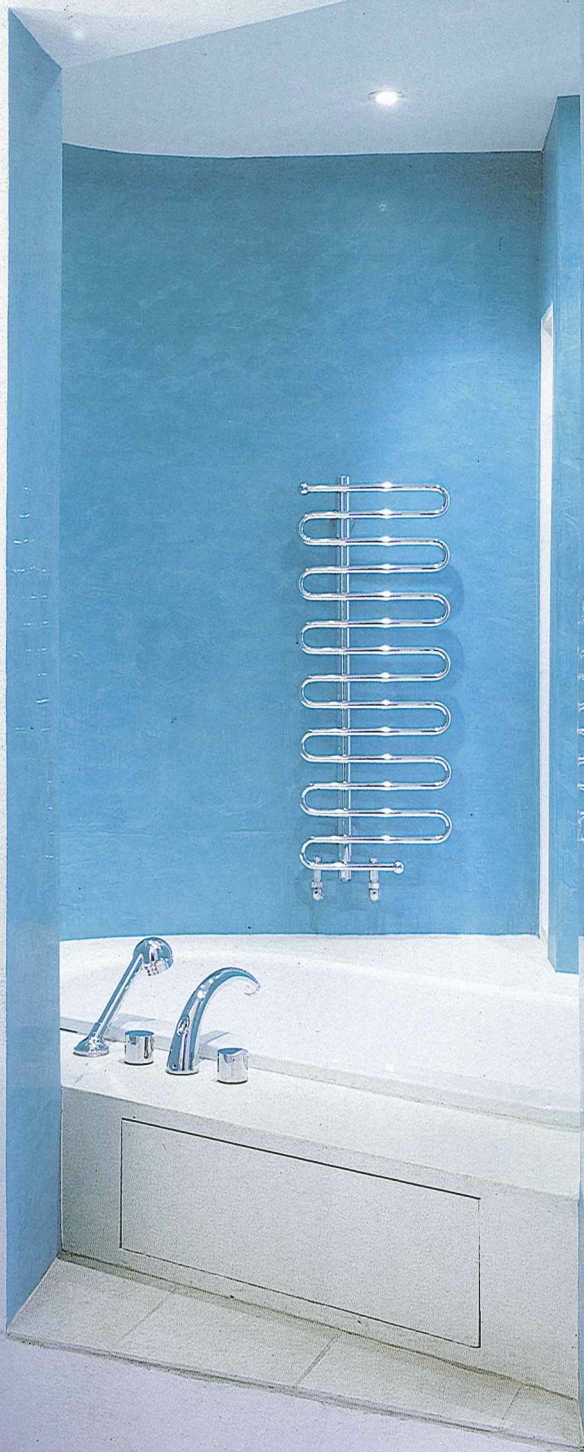
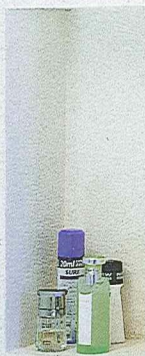
BRITAIN'S BEST AND BIGGEST SELLING KITCHEN, BATHROOM AND BEDROOM MAGAZINE



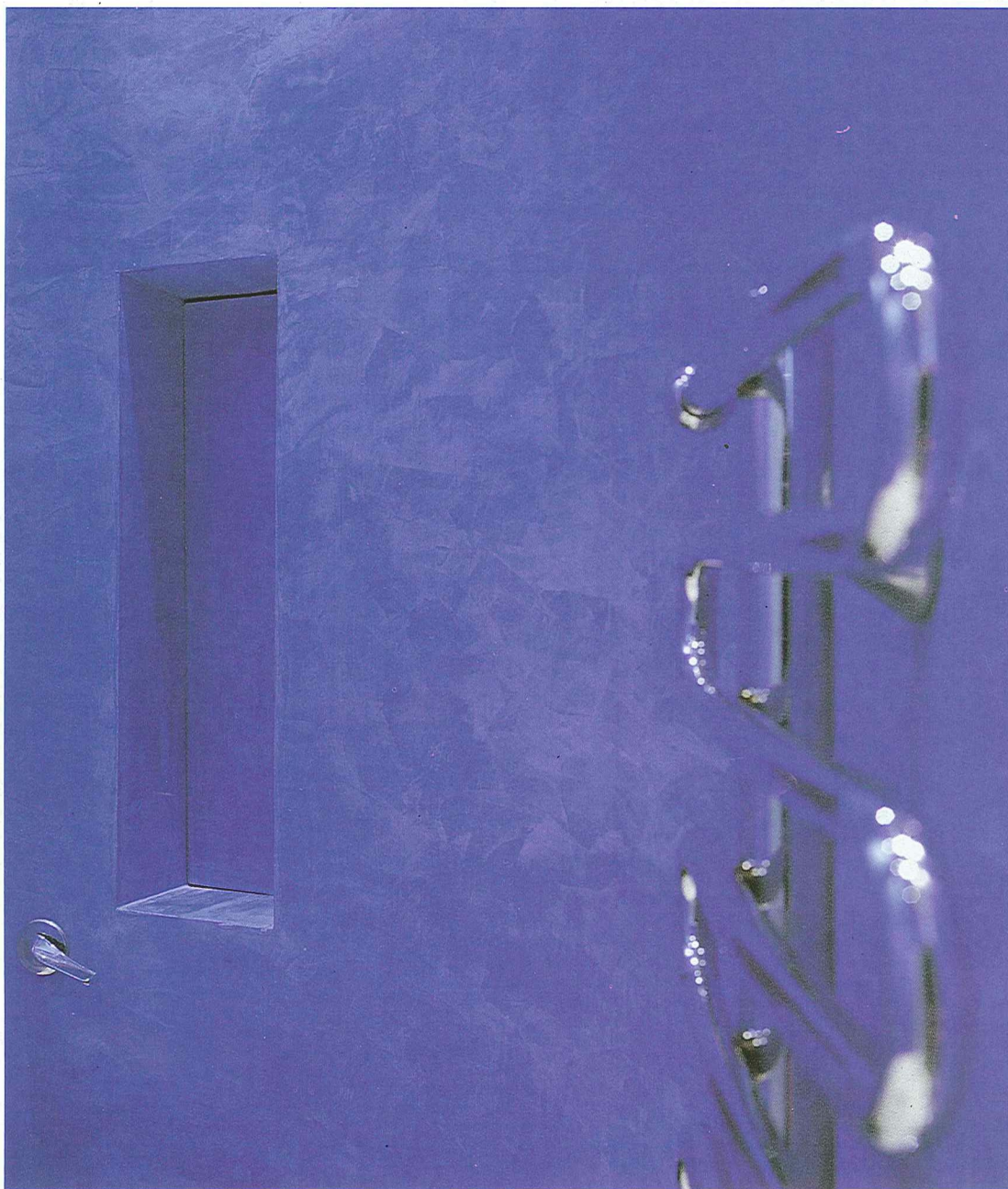
Twin peaks

The symmetrical arrangement of this bathroom – with a bath on one side and shower on the other – makes it the ultimate balanced bathing zone

Report: Victoria O'Brien Photography: Chris Gascoigne/View







PREVIOUS PAGE: STANDING IN THE COBALT BLUE SHOWER POD, THE VIEW OF THE TRIANGULAR WASH ZONE LEADS INTO THE TURQUOISE BLUE BATH AREA

LEFT: VIBRANT COBALT BLUE IN THE SHOWER AREA GIVES EARLY MORNINGS AN INVIGORATING WAKE-UP CALL

OPPOSITE: THE GENTLY CURVED WALLS OF EACH POD WERE MADE WATERPROOF USING A SPECIALIST TECHNIQUE OF HARD POLISHED VENETIAN PLASTER

Dick Parnell, a head-hunter based in Hong Kong, has very firm ideas about how a bathroom should work. "Taking a bath is about spending time chilling out, while a quick blast under the shower is what I use to wake me up in the morning," he explains. "There's a definite difference between how you use the bathroom at weekends, when you've got time on your hands, and being in a mad rush for work during the week. I wanted a place that satisfied both."

Dick worked alongside architect John Kerr to design his own dual personality bathroom – one moment hectic, the next completely tranquil – for his London home. The result was a twin pod design.

Placed in one corner of the large bedroom, in what used to be the first floor sitting room of a grand Victorian

villa, high ceilings allow for the two, gently curved pods to be viewed as separate elements to the rest of the room. The pods, in a brilliantly vibrant shade of blue, fall short of the tall ceiling height, allowing the original plaster moulding running around the top edge of the room to still be seen intact.

The idea of the pod arrangement was to create an integrated 'his' and 'hers' bathroom – a huge round tub for her, with walls coated in a soothing light turquoise, and a storming power shower for him in a much deeper, darker and more masculine shade of cobalt. The walls are not painted, but made up of painstakingly applied layers of coloured pigment and polished Venetian plaster – a specialist effect that is completely water resistant.

"It was important that all the surfaces were completely watertight," explains John. "We wanted to avoid having to



use tiles on the walls, and this was the perfect solution. Each pod forms a gentle curve once you are inside it, and because of the sealed surface, you can splash about as much as you want."

Seen on plan, the two pods seem to be joined at the hip, with a central triangular section just at the point where they meet in the middle. The central triangle houses the basin and provides a link between the two wet areas. This acts like a central meeting point between the two spaces – imagine a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles – a place where, whether you are taking a bath or having a shower, you naturally gravitate to. Storage space is conveniently situated beneath the glass countertop of the basin, with 'his' and 'hers' cubes and open shelves for towels.

The pure white walls of this central zone provide a change in rhythm from the strident cobalt blue of the shower area and the sunnier, lighter touch of the turquoise walls in the bath pod.

The bath surround is also made from Venetian plaster, and because it completely fills the space inside the pod, John placed a drainage hole in the surround itself, "So that when you use the detachable showerhead in the bath, water doesn't spill over into the basin area."

Despite the tough stainless steel architectural fittings, solid coil radiators and sleek acid-etched glass surfaces, there is something very rustic about the atmosphere of this bathroom. Think Matisse's cobalt blue abstract nudes or the watery, luminous turquoise shades of Monet's *Water Lilies*. The Venetian plaster surfaces are subtly textured, with a tactile quality that lies in marked contrast to the smooth surfaces used in the rest of the scheme.

John has his own poetic description of it. "It's exactly like a lychee fruit," he says. "That was the inspiration. The outside, blue surfaces and walls appear rough and textured like the hard, crusty shell of a lychee fruit. But when you open it up, it's perfectly soft and silky smooth inside."

BARE ESSENTIALS

ARCHITECT AND DESIGN John Kerr Associates, 53a Bayham Street, London NW1 0AA (020 7209 2784)

ACID-ETCHED GLASS AND MIRROR Abbas Glass, 85 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4RL (020 7722 9721)

VENETIAN PLASTER Regency Venetian Plastering, call 01474 707255 for further information

FLOOR TILES Botticino unglazed porcelain from Tower Ceramics, 91 Parkway, Camden Town, London NW1 7PP (020 7485 7192)

SANITARYWARE: BASIN AND TAP, ASTON MATTHEWS, 141-147a Essex Road, London N1 2SN (020 7226 7220), BATH AND TAPS, Philippe Starck from CP Hart, Newnham Terrace, Hercules Road, London SE1 7DR (020 7902 1000)

RADIATOR Bisque, call 01225 469244 for a brochure

THE STAINLESS STEEL BASIN IS SET INTO A 25mm-THICK GLASS WORKTOP, WHILE TWO WINDOWS EITHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR ALLOW LIGHT TO FILTER THROUGH INTO A DIMLY LIT CORRIDOR BEHIND